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The most vociferous opposition to globalization in Western countries has come from the extreme left: anti-globalization riots from Seattle to Genoa have been based on the view that mobile global capitalism is making the rich richer and the poor poorer.[1] We have not yet had much violent opposition to globalization from right-wing cultural nationalists—except perhaps in France, where McDonalds restaurants have been attacked as symbols of American culinary imperialism. The French, of course, take culture very seriously—especially culinary culture. But the general view in the West seems to be that globalization is simply another product of the progress of Western civilization, following inevitably in the wake of industrialization, capitalism, modernity, postmodernity, and the unstoppable advance of science and technology.[2] Indeed, I suspect that most of us in the West perceive globalization as a kind of irresistible historical tsunami: as with the earlier Industrial Revolution—of which in many respects it is only the latest phase—it would be futile to adopt a "Luddite" stance and try to "stop" it. The most we can hope to do is ameliorate its more unfortunate "side-effects"—in particular, the damage it causes to traditional societies, cultures, and natural environments—while, of course, maximizing its benefits (or should we say "profits"?).

In Asia the view is somewhat different. Globalization is often seen as a new phase of Western, especially Anglo-American, imperialism, threatening a renewal not just of economic exploitation but also of cultural domination—as symbolized pre-eminently by the globalization of the English language. Since 9/11 we have all been made acutely aware of the dangers of an Islamic fundamentalist cum Arab nationalist backlash against this perceived threat. But little thought has been given to the possibility of a nationalist backlash coming from the other side of Asia, from a country that seems so firmly implanted within the global capitalist system: Japan. The very idea might seem absurd today, but perhaps we should not forget that Japan has a long and powerful tradition of both cultural and political nationalism, and that the latter has sometimes erupted into various kinds of extremist, anti-democratic action, including terrorism. Furthermore, at

1 This essay attempts to draw some overarching conclusions about Japanese cultural nationalism in the context of a globalizing Asia based largely on the research conducted by an international group of Japan and Asia scholars who contributed to three books I have edited in recent years: *Asian Nationalism in an Age of Globalization* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2001), *Nations Under Siege: Globalization and Nationalism in Asia* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), and *Japanese Cultural Nationalism at Home and in the Asia Pacific* (London: Global Oriental, 2003). I thank all of these learned colleagues for their freely shared knowledge, insight, and passion.

2 For example, a recent best-selling account of globalization that presents this "standard" view of it as unstoppable and largely beneficial is *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat*. See Friedman 2005.

certain periods in the island nation's modern history these two forces—the cultural and the political—have combined to produce a quite virulent resistance to the "foreign influence" of Westernization or modernization. As the famous prewar slogan proclaimed: to reclaim its native "soul," the Japanese nation had to "overcome modernity."[3] Even today, an arch-traditional, quasi-religious strain of cultural nationalism is prevalent, or at least paid lip service to, not just by the lunatic fringe but by some influential sectors of the Japanese political elite. In May 2000, for instance, the Prime Minister of the day, Mori Yoshirō 森善朗, caused a storm of protest, both domestically and internationally, with his declaration before a meeting of lawmakers belonging to the Shintō Seiji Renmei (Shinto Political League) that: "We (have to make efforts to) make the public realize that Japan is a divine nation centering on the Emperor. It's been thirty years since we started our activities based on this thought."[4] Although some foreign observers may have been genuinely shocked by Mori's reactionary, "atavistic," stance, no one who knew Japan or Japanese politics well was particularly surprised. Indeed, members of his own party generally did not challenge the validity of his remark; they merely regretted its indiscretion as a public pronouncement. As the unintentionally revealing excuse offered by the Secretary General of the party explained: "the comment was probably a platitude for the religious group."[5] In other words, in the circles in which Mori and his colleagues moved, the belief that "Japan is a divine nation centering on the Emperor" was merely an accepted truism, so that nothing much should be read into the Prime Minister's remark—in the context in which it was given, it certainly did not represent any revolutionary departure from the norm. This despite the fact that the statement clearly infringed upon the postwar Constitution of Japan, which disestablished Shinto as the state religion and placed the people rather than the Emperor at the nation's sovereign "center."

The Prime Minister, as the Secretary General suggested, may have been merely repeating a ritualistic formula to please the ears of his elderly, conservative audience, but his statement, even if designed only to curry favor, still shows how closely associated Japanese nationalism remains, in the popular mind, with Shinto, the emperor system, and even emperor-worship. Although some analysts have presented Mori's "gaffe" as yet another symptom of Japan's "move to the right" in the late 20th century,[6] Mori's own comment ("It's been thirty years since we started our activities based on this thought") makes it clear that, throughout much of the postwar period, such religio-nationalist sentiments were never far from the mainstream of Japanese political life.

There are, of course, other examples in Asia of the close association of nationalism with religion—Hindu nationalism in India, for instance, or the many different national varieties of Islamic nationalism—but we must also remember that, within the Asian context, Japan's historical experience has been somewhat unique. In the past century and a half it has suffered—and profited by—two periods when it was reduced to colonial or semi-colonial status: in the latter half of the 19th century, the period of extraterritorial treaty

3 See, for instance, Najita and Harootunian 1988, Harootunian 2000, and Hirakawa 2005.

4 *The Japan Times Online*, 17 May 2000.

5 Ibid.

6 See, for instance, McCormack 2002.

ports, gunboat diplomacy, and enforced low tariffs; and from 1945 until 1953, the period of Allied Occupation, when General McArthur ruled as the last shogun. Even today Japan cannot be said to have completely outgrown its semi-colonial status vis-à-vis the United States. On the other hand, during the half century from 1895 to 1945, Japan itself became a major colonial power ruling over a vast arc of the Asia-Pacific region, and in the latter half of the 20th century it became a major globalizing power, first in economic terms and now, increasingly, in cultural terms too.[7]

Given this rather conflicted, contradictory history, it is perhaps not surprising that Japanese attitudes towards globalization tend to be ambivalent—not to say schizophrenic—and that Japanese cultural nationalists often cannot seem to make up their minds whether they are victims of globalization or major globalizers themselves. To give a minor example of what I mean from my own experience: I have heard a Japanese colleague complain in one breath about the global dominance of English, and boast in the next breath that Japanese itself has become a global language, and is bound to surpass English as the future "international language of business."

Not that I would wish to downplay the serious threat posed to other languages by the global dominance of English. The doyen of comparative literature in Japan, Hirakawa Sukehiro 平川祐弘, has written movingly of the age-old desire of poets to express themselves in their mother tongue: he argues that a cultural nationalism centered on language and literature motivated the formation of an independent Japanese poetics, and of an independent national identity based in part on that poetics, as early as the beginning of the tenth century, when Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 issued the "first declaration of a Japanese *art poétique*".[8] Just as the vernacular European poets would declare their independence of Latin several centuries later, Tsurayuki proudly declared his independence from the lingua franca of East Asia, Chinese. As Hirakawa writes:

> In this defense of Yamato-*uta*, Japanese poetry, the national Japanese poetry was implicitly opposed to Kara-*uta*, Chinese poetry, which was in fashion at the Imperial Court of Kyoto. Persons of culture of the time were supposed to compose poems in classical Chinese. Tsurayuki, however, defended national poetry, because, according to him, it alone is natural and divine.[9]

Hirakawa sees this as a universal, almost instinctive, and therefore inevitable impulse: "My assumption is that there is a kind of psychological law—that is, there is a common attitude shared by minorities to wish to express themselves in their own mother tongue and that need of expression is an important driving force of nationalism."[10]

Given, then, that language and literature have so often been made a site of strenuous contention by cultural nationalists seeking to assert their independence from more powerful, globalizing civilizations, Hirakawa predicts that the global dominance of the present-day lingua franca, English, will inevitably provoke new expressions of language-based

7 For perceptive analyses of Japan's growing role as an international cultural power, especially in Asia, see Söderberg and Reader 2000.

8 Hirakawa 2004, p. 27.

9 Ibid., p. 28.

10 Ibid., p. 27.

cultural nationalism in 21st-century Japan and elsewhere.[11]

A more recent example of Japanese resistance to foreign linguistic domination occurred during the postwar Occupation period, in response to the almost hare-brained scheme for "language reform" concocted by one Robert King Hall, an official of the Education Division of the occupying authorities. Hall was convinced that a substitution of the Roman alphabet for the traditional Japanese writing system, a complex mixture of Chinese characters and native syllabary, would help "democratise" Japan.[12] Since language plays such a crucial role both as a medium and as an object of nationalist sentiment, this scheme seemed to threaten the very core of Japan's national identity. As Harry Wray writes: "Because of the lack of a clear SCAP policy statement, the Japanese Government and most people feared the loss of their written language and link with their ancestors, and historical and literary past."[13] Hall pursued the scheme with all the blinkered zeal of his missionary ancestors, and Wray's account of the personality clashes involved reads like a first-rate psychological novel. Cooler heads prevailed in the end, which was fortunate because, as Wray points out, the "reform would have borne severe repercussions affecting other Occupation reforms because moderates and liberals would have been deeply alienated by the abolition of kanji. Post-Occupation Japanese-American relations also would have been affected."[14] Nevertheless, the modest simplifications of the written language which were enacted under Occupation pressure still anger "conservative scholars and nationalists." Indeed, writers who were cultural nationalists, including such major figures as Tanizaki 谷崎潤一郎, Kawabata 川端康成 and Mishima 三島由紀夫, ignored these "reforms" and continued to use the traditional writing system until the end of their careers.

As these two examples given by Hirakawa and Wray make clear, the strength and longevity of Japanese cultural nationalism are a function not just of domestic need but also of foreign pressure: Japan's self-perception as an island nation continually under siege from much larger and more powerful civilizations no doubt accounts for the exaggerated emphasis on its cultural uniqueness that appears in nationalist writings since at least the 18th century. It is obviously a self-defensive mechanism of a type that larger civilizations, with their easy confidence in their own superiority, feel no need for. The problem arises, however, when Japan tries to step from being an isolated island nation with a kind of siege mentality into being an expansive colonial or globalizing power.

I think it is instructive to compare Japan with the United States on this point. One of the great strengths of American cultural nationalism has been its easy, unquestioning assumption of universality—a heritage of the late 18th century, the age of the Enlightenment and of the French and American Revolutions. Indeed, this assumption often takes on a quasi-religious, Messianic quality: the globalization of American cultural values, of the "American way of life," is presented as the best hope for the liberation, prosperity and happiness of all humanity. The recent conquests of Afghanistan and Iraq were justified quite blatantly in these terms not only by the Washington political establishment but

11 Ibid., p. 34.

12 Wray 2001, p. 258.

13 Ibid., p. 253.

14 Ibid., p. 254.

also, more surprisingly, by a vast consensus among a disturbingly uncritical American media. Indeed, it seems that this view of the universal validity and applicability of American cultural values is so deeply entrenched in American culture that very few Americans recognize it as a form of cultural nationalism. But even if one considers this American world-view to be naïve or arrogant—as many non-Americans and even some Americans do—one must admit that it carries a certain potency—something of the potency of a self-fulfilling prophecy—in this particular historical moment when the U.S. strides the globe as the sole superpower and the major driving force of globalization.

In contrast, the exclusivity of the Japanese cultural nationalists, their constant harping on their own uniqueness, would seem to handicap or bedevil any attempt to globalize Japanese culture to an extent that would be commensurate with Japan's position as the world's second largest economic power. Certainly Japanese culture has not yet been globalized as successfully as its American counterpart, despite the best efforts of agencies such as the Japan Foundation. And yet the fact remains that it is increasingly being globalized—sushi shops are becoming as common as hamburger joints in many parts of the world, and, to make an almost random list, Japanese manga (comics), anime (cartoons), karaoke, judo, karate, sumo, bonsai, haiku, pop music stars and pop novelists such as Murakami Haruki 村上春樹 and Yoshimoto Banana 吉本ばなな are becoming increasingly popular in Asia and throughout the world. Of course, this offers further proof, if any were needed, that the Japanese cultural nationalist claim to absolute uniqueness and exclusivity is based entirely on myth. But the more interesting point is that it is this very mythical, self-contradictory view of Japanese culture that has itself been successfully globalized: through everything from the writer Kawabata Yasunari's Nobel talk of 1968 to the latest Japanese company propaganda booklets and even Japanese language textbooks.

As Kōsaku Yoshino 吉野耕作 has made clear in his study of the plethora of popular handbooks and manuals on international cultural differences appearing in Japan today, it seems that, the more Japan is pressured to interact with the outside world, the more its nationalist ideologues stress the island nation's uniqueness and even superiority.[15] Ironically, these publications, which are often sponsored by large corporations such as Nippon Steel and Mitsubishi, are ostensibly meant to encourage international friendship and understanding. But, by reiterating all the hoary old clichés and stereotypes about East/West cultural differences and Japanese uniqueness, they reinforce cultural nationalism in its most reactionary form: the sense that "Japan" is, in essence, a separate, alternative and somehow superior civilization, especially vis-à-vis the West. Presented in this way as part of a laudable project of "internationalization," nationalism is in fact made more palatable to the postwar "liberal" generation: as Yoshino writes, it "appeals to those in contemporary Japanese society who have not completely rejected nationalism but wish to avoid a return to the pre-war type of nationalism."[16] Thus "discourses of cultural differences," produced by nationalist academic writers of *Nihonjinron,* are "'reproduced' and popularized in cross-cultural manuals for the 'consumption' of those concerned with intercultural communication. . . . this process serves to increase sensitivity to cultural differences be-

15 Yoshino 2001, pp. 19–33.

16 Ibid., p. 22.

tween nations, thereby enhancing a sense of cultural nationalism."[17]

In this respect, even the current Japanese fad of "internationalization" is used to foster nationalism—surely another sign of the extraordinary strength and durability of nationalism in Japan. But this nationalism has also felt itself to be under threat of late, mainly because of the more than decade-long hangover Japan has suffered since the boom years of the 1980s. This is what Gavan McCormack aptly terms its *fin de siècle* malaise.[18] McCormack points to a series of phenomena which emerged in the post-Cold War period as symptoms of the contradictions inherent in the post-Second World War Japanese polity: "The edifice of the post-war Japanese state was erected over a series of unresolved contradictions: between the past of imperial militarism and fascism and the present of popular sovereignty and pacifism; between formal national sovereignty on the one hand and the circumstances of occupation in which the postwar state was born and the complex of ways in which a semi-dependent orientation towards the United States became entrenched since then on the other; between the theory of the world's most democratic constitution and the practice of highly concentrated bureaucratic power."[19]

The resultant sense of dislocation and the perceived threat to national identity has resulted so far not in any serious attempt to resolve the contradictions but in a vague "nostalgia for a strong Japan" which has led, in turn, to a spread of right-wing nationalism even among the "liberal" middle and professional classes.[20] One recent manifestation of this has been the campaigns to revise history textbooks so that they will "inculcate a sense of pride in the history of our nation."[21] As a typical representative of this "'liberal' wing of neo-nationalism," McCormack offers Tokyo University Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu 藤岡信勝:

> Certain qualities in Fujioka's writings and actions seem to be widely shared by his generation: an ignorance of and lack of interest in history (save as a telling of the national 'story'); a feeling of humiliation at the constant harping on Japan's supposed war crimes and dark history; anger at the 'diplomacy of apology' conducted by spokesmen for the Japanese government; and irritation at the low posture constantly required by Japan's incorporation within the United States sphere, under its umbrella, and subjected to regular doses of its condescension and bashing. Distaste or antipathy towards the United States is combined with emotional attachment to a vague form of pure 'Japaneseness,' both of which sentiments are wrapped in a deep anxiety over the confusions of late modernity.[22]

In other words, these movements seek to defend Japan against globalization by restoring its "Japaneseness"—which means, in particular, a restoration of the Emperor to his prewar position of centrality and sovereignty and a restoration also of proper respect

17 Ibid., p. 21.

18 McCormack 2002, p. 137.

19 Ibid., p. 139.

20 Ibid., p. 144.

21 Quoted in ibid., p. 143.

22 Ibid., p. 144.

for such national symbols as the flag, the anthem and the military. What is also highly significant is that: "Increasingly, 'Japaneseness' is defined, as it was in the 1930s, by opposition to Asia."[23] Of course, this is all very familiar: right-wing activists have been calling for such a "restoration" for decades. But, as McCormack points out: "These conceptions of Japaneseness might be referred to as 'rightist' and traditional. What is interesting in the 1990s is that they began to converge with other streams of thought shared by many progressive and liberal intellectuals."[24] And, of course, what this implies is that the new nationalism is likely to be far more widely influential than was its older variety, which was confined to extremist fringe groups. In fact, it is probably for this reason that there has been little popular protest against the Japanese government's increasingly nationalistic policies as chronicled by McCormack. Indeed, in 2001 a surprising new phenomenon appeared in Japanese politics, a new prime minister, Koizumi Jun'ichirō 小泉純一郎, who enjoyed an almost rock-star popularity, in stark contrast to his very unpopular predecessor Mori Yoshirō—even though, like Mori, he was a reactionary nationalist in the most traditional LDP mold. It seemed as if much of the Japanese public believed that they had finally found the "strong man" who would pull their country out of its doldrums. In terms of international relations, however, his regime quickly ran into trouble, when the Chinese and Koreans expressed outrage and threatened retaliation over new Japanese government-approved history textbooks that "whitewashed" Japan's wartime record of atrocities committed on the continent.

Thus, as McCormack points out: "it is hard to resist the conclusion that the problems remain unresolved in Japan as the new century begins, and that the measures being adopted to address them are both revanchist, in the sense of uncritically reviving the formulas of the earlier, imperial Japanese state, and contradictory, in the sense of fusing dependent status in international affairs with reassertion of the symbols and myths of a proud, pure, autonomous Japan."[25]

Of course, the Japanese obsession with what is "purely Japanese" is echoed throughout Asia by various forms of purist or essentialist nationalism which can become particularly dangerous in countries more ethnically diverse than Japan, such as the countries of south and southeast Asia. Here ethnic minorities such as the Chinese are often perceived as the insidious agents of globalization, enriching themselves at the expense of indigenous populations and posing a threat by their very presence to the ethnic and cultural bases of national identity. In times of economic crisis, such "visible minorities" can easily become scapegoats, often at the instigation of corrupt and unscrupulous governments trying to deflect blame away from themselves. This is exactly what happened in Indonesia in 1997-98, for instance, when the economic crisis was accompanied by anti-Chinese riots.

With its greater wealth and its high degree of ethnic homogeneity, Japan would seem to be in a far more secure position, and one might wonder whether it is now preparing for a new period of anti-foreignism and "national isolation." Certainly there are many historical precedents to support this supposition: after a period of opening to the "outside world"

23 Ibid., p. 154.

24 Ibid., p. 145.

25 Ibid., p. 161.

and absorbing what it wanted from foreign cultures, the island nation would often close clam-tight as if by a kind of national self-protective instinct. But is this still possible in the high-tech world that Japan itself has helped to create? Even if its own cultural traditions or national survival instincts are now urging it towards a period of isolation, is national isolation a viable option in this interconnected and increasingly globalized world? As Arvind Das has pointed out, there are no "inside" and "outside" worlds in this age when the internet freely crosses national borders.[26]

And so we come back again to the inescapable fact that Japanese culture faces the prospect of being increasingly globalized. This can happen, of course, in two ways: either Japanese culture itself is spread around the world or it is opened up to incoming international influences at home; in other words, either it becomes a global cultural force itself or it is transformed by global cultural influences. We might call these the active and passive poles of globalization.

In this context, Japanese cultural nationalists find themselves caught in a kind of paradoxical double bind: if Japanese culture is globalized in either the active or the passive sense, it will be "hybridized" and thus stand in danger of losing what they see as its unique essence, its quintessentially Japanese character. On the other hand, if it is not globalized, especially in the active sense of being spread globally, it stands in danger of being forever regarded as a relatively powerless and peripheral culture. After all, major world powers since ancient times have all tried to spread or globalize their cultures to the maximum geographical extent of their imperial expansion: cultural power was always a natural concomitant of military and economic power. Any nation that wishes to become an imperial or global power needs to develop some sort of universalistic ideology based on its own cultural values.

During Japan's modern imperialist period—roughly, the half century between the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 and the end of the Pacific War in 1945—Japanese nationalists solved this problem in two ways: on the one hand, by adopting a straightforward Western-style racist/imperialist ideology and, on the other hand, by preaching the more high-minded doctrine of pan-Asianism (and, of course, these two "ideologies" were not mutually exclusive in practice). One of the most authoritative contemporary writers on pan-Asianism, Pasenjit Duara, has pointed out that those who challenged the Eurocentric Enlightenment ideal of a universal Civilization, seen by many as a justification for Western imperialism, with an alternative ideal of pan-Asian civilization, were given a significant boost by global reactions against the horrors of the First World War: "Writer after writer denounced the materialism and destructiveness of Western Civilization."[27] Since the war was a very bad advertisement for the glories and advantages of Western civilization, and especially for its boast of being the engine of human progress, Herder's notion of the value of individually different, locally-rooted cultures seemed to make sense again, and, ironically in view of Germany's "defeat," "the Germanic notion of *Kultur* gained a significant victory over the notion of a universal Civilization which measured value only

26 Das 2002, p. 44.

27 Duara 2002, p. 69.

according to certain Western standards of progress."[28]

At the same time, the post-World War One period witnessed the "final triumph of nationalism or national self-determination over imperialism as the hegemonic global ideology" (best represented by Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of national self-determination).[29] But Duara argues that nationalism never appeared to suffice by itself; it always seemed to need reinforcement by a civilizational ideology that would give nation states a sense of "transcendent spiritual purpose."[30] Civilization became the "highly self-conscious ideology of the nation," giving it an "exalted and noble vision" of itself.[31] Thus nations all over the world told "their histories in the same linear mode of emergent national subjects linked to classical civilizations."[32] In the case of Asian nations, the paradox was that, in thus asserting their independence from the West, they were using what was essentially a Western idea of civilization: "it is important to recognize that the new discourse of civilization—especially Eastern civilization—was affirmed in the West before it was confirmed in Asia. In this sense too, civilization remains a postcolonial concept."[33]

This can be seen most clearly in the case of Japan, by far the most successful practitioner of this form of civilizational one-upmanship: "there are several narrative strategies within the historiography of nations that can be deployed to position a nation as the true representative or the leader of (if not equivalent to) a certain civilizational tradition. The most powerful of these—at least in terms of its impact on the domestic population—was the Japanese claim of inheriting the leadership of Asian civilization because of its success in mastering Western Civilization…."[34] The Japanese notion of an alternative civilization was centered on the concept of Asia, a concept the Japanese had inherited from the Europeans in the nineteenth century. Duara illustrates this process well with the example of Okakura Tenshin 岡倉天心, who was among the first bilingual and bicultural thinkers in Meiji Japan. His construction of an alternative Asian civilization "entailed a deep familiarity with European modes of constructing the idea of a civilization."[35] For him Asian civilization differed from aggressive Western civilization by virtue of its "promotion of peace and beauty."[36] After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War it became a commonplace that Japan should lead Asia because it harmonized the best of Asian civilization with Western civilization. But, Duara cautions, Japanese pan-Asian ideology cannot be entirely dismissed as mere disguised imperialism, and he gives some examples of sincere pan-Asianists who tried to establish multi-Asian utopias on the continent. It is also a significant fact that Japanese civilizational discourse and pan-Asian ideology had a considerable influence on the rest of Asia—including, ironically, on its former civilizational mentor, China. Although points of view regarding Eastern versus Western civilization

28 Ibid., p. 67.
29 Ibid., p. 69.
30 Ibid., p. 63.
31 Ibid., p. 72.
32 Ibid., p. 70.
33 Ibid., p. 67.
34 Ibid., p. 72.
35 Ibid., p. 75.
36 Ibid.

were various among Chinese intellectuals, all shared the basic assumption that "the differences between East and West were civilizational differences, and that such differences posited holistic, isolated and 'pure' civilizations."[37]

Although Asian nations have been able to use civilizational discourse in this way to serve their own ends, Duara also points out that, since civilization ultimately transcends nation, it can be a double-edged sword: "The transcendent stance of civilization...may permit a critique of the nation and...can produce the problem of loyalties divided between those to the nation and to civilization" (a fact ignored by recent scholars such as Samuel Huntington, who attempt to conflate nation and civilization).[38] Within civilizational discourse itself there is also a conflict between the nationalist impulse to conflate civilization with national territory and the "spiritual" (and more popular social) impulse to view civilization transnationally or universally. A good example of the conflicts which can result is provided by popular "redemptive" religious sects such as the Falungong, and by the oppressive response to them by the Chinese state. Indeed, Duara finds that such populist movements incur the displeasure not only of national governments but also of national intellectual establishments, historians included: modern nationalist historiography's "repugnance towards social movements that refuse to acknowledge allegiance to the nation state" has meant that such mass movements, based on civilizational discourse, have been ignored.[39]

In China particularly, the reputation of redemptive sects among nationalists was not helped by their apparent occasional collaboration with the invading Japanese, who sought "to appropriate their universalism and convert it into a more exclusive ideology of Eastern civilization."[40] In the Japanese puppet state of Manchukuo and later in north China many of these societies became recognized by the government as "educational organizations" whose purpose was to instil a belief in "pan-Asian values." Tolerated in this way by the Japanese, such societies were perceived by their compatriots as collaborators with the foreign imperialists and as opponents of their own countrymen, the nationalists (KMT) and the communists (CCP). Nevertheless, Duara poses the difficult moral question: "how far can we hold a people responsible for the state's manipulation of their ideals?"[41]

But, to return to Japan itself, how did nationalist thinkers there reconcile their own cultural nationalism with the ideology of pan-Asianism, particularly vis-à-vis China, the neighboring country that has always loomed largest in Japanese nationalist thought? Of course, there can be no cultural nationalism without a "significant other" for comparison and contrast, but often that "other" is little more than a distant abstraction, perhaps even a conveniently absent whipping boy, as China was to the 18th century Japanese nativists. Once Japan embarked upon its imperialist adventures on the Asian continent in the late 19th century, however, China turned from being a distant abstraction into an immediate and urgent problem, a problem that, if not correctly solved, could endanger Japan's own

37 Ibid., p. 81.

38 Ibid., p. 72.

39 Ibid., p. 84.

40 Ibid., p. 90.

41 Ibid., p. 93.

very future. As Jung-Sun Han has succinctly put it: "the modern Japanese transformation was made of both 'nation-building' and 'empire-building' processes, which were mutually constitutive, sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementing each other."[42] Thus the question of Japan's proper relation with China in particular, in cultural as much as in economic or political terms, became a major preoccupation for many Japanese nationalist thinkers, and inevitably had a shaping influence on their own cultural nationalism.

The first point that should be made—especially, one feels, for an English-speaking readership—is that the modern history of Japan's relations with its Asia-Pacific neighbors has not been irrelievably unpleasant or antagonistic. There have been positive as well as negative aspects to this relationship, and not only in its post-World War Two phase. Above all, the Meiji Japan that transformed itself into an independent and powerful nation state, and the post-World War Two Japan that rose from the ashes to become an economic superpower, both served in their time as an inspiring role-model for other Asian nations. And there is more than a dash of uncomfortable truth in the Japanese nationalists' continuing claim that imperial Japan helped free Asia from the imperial West. In present-day India, for instance, Subhas Chandra Bose, leader of the anti-Raj "Indian National Army" under direct Japanese patronage and control, is now widely regarded as a national hero, although the British still tend to see him as a perfidious traitor. Furthermore, as Ken Henshall has pointed out in his study of the Japanese rule of Micronesia, even Japanese colonialism was not always heavy-handed and it could sometimes yield real benefits for the local population. Indeed, Henshall finds that the Micronesians fared rather better under the Japanese than they had done under the Spanish or Germans, not only economically but also in terms of the health and education services provided for them. Thus, when war came in the 1930s, "not a few islanders willingly volunteered to join the Japanese forces" and even "petitioned to be allowed to fight for the emperor."[43] This was at least one case, then, when the Japanese nationalist rhetoric about helping "culturally less advanced" peoples seemed to have some basis in reality.

Nor can we discount the significant cultural influence that modern Japan has had, especially on its East Asian neighbors (those who belong to the old Sinocentric, "Confucian" cultural sphere). Japanese scholarship on China, for instance, has played a major role in advancing the modern scientific study of Chinese history and civilization, even in China itself. As Aida-Yuen Wong has shown, pioneering Japanese work in Dunhuangology (*tonkōgaku* 敦煌学)—that is, the study of the treasure trove of ancient manuscripts and artefacts found at Dunhuang and other Silk Road sites—at Kyoto Imperial University from the 1910s to the 1930s, with its novel approach characterized by multidisciplinary and multicultural scholarship, significantly "impacted on the development of Chinese scholarship. "[44]

Nonetheless, to move now to the negative side of the modern Japanese relationship with China, Wong also finds that this scholarship was blemished by the fact that "the subjects of inquiry and the formulations of problem betrayed an ideological position that was

42 Han 2004, p. 231.

43 Henshall 2004, p. 245.

44 Wong 2004, p. 253.

nationalistic."[45] In particular, the Kyoto Imperial University scholars were motivated by a desire to undermine not only Eurocentrism but, more surprisingly, Sinocentrism. That is, they sought to use the evidence of their Silk Road findings to show that China was not the single, great, hegemonic civilization of East Asia but a polyglot mixture of many cultures, some of Central Asian or even West Asian origin. This "multicultural reading of Chinese history" was championed, for instance, by Haneda Tōru 羽田亨, who "posited that before Buddhism took root in China, it had already been highly developed in many parts of the Silk Road. This disturbed the traditional belief that China was the most progressive culture in its sphere of influence."[46] In thus downplaying the high cultural achievements of the Chinese, of course, the Kyoto scholars were, at some level, trying to make the myth of Japan's "civilizing mission" in China seem less implausible.

The absurd idea of the Chinese as not only culturally but racially inferior to the Japanese had its origins, as Rumi Sakamoto has shown, in the social Darwinist racial stereotypes that the Meiji Japanese inherited from the high age of Victorian imperialism.[47] For instance, although the leading Meiji intellectual Nitobe Inazō's 新渡戸稲造 negative attitude to China, as described by George Oshiro, compromised his reputation as a liberal Christian humanitarian and international "bridge-builder," tragically marring the end of a long and distinguished career, in this respect Nitobe was, unfortunately, a typical "man of Meiji," with an unshakable belief in the "natural" hierarchy of races and cultures.[48] As Sakamoto succinctly puts it:

> The negative representation of China and the Chinese in the discourse of the Japanese Enlightenment resulted from the Meiji elites' attempt to resist the Orientalist-racist gaze of the West by constructing a subject position of the 'Japanese race' as a distinct category from the 'Chinese race.' … the Japanese construction of the 'Chinese race' as Japan's inferior Other must be understood in relation to the Western representation of the 'yellow race' (including Japan) as the uncivilised Other of the West.[49]

And, of course, as in the West, this racist ideology provided a convenient justification for a colonial takeover of the "uncivilized Other."

We can see the other side of Meiji social Darwinism in the thought of the journalist and geography professor, Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂: its tendency to idealize the West. Just as some Japanese looked down on their fellow Asians, he looked up to the "Anglo-Saxon race," admiring in particular the supposed "social utopia" they had recently created in the antipodes. In his best-selling book describing his 1886 visit to the South Pacific, he singled out New Zealand especially, in Masako Gavin's words, "as a paragon, an 'Anglo-Saxon miracle,' whose economic and social achievement provided an ideal model for a new Japan."[50] But his meeting with a Maori chief seemed to teach him another Darwin-

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid., p. 257.

47 Sakamoto 2004, pp. 181–182.

48 Oshiro 2004, pp. 80–87.

49 Sakamoto 2004, pp. 179–180.

50 Gavin 2004, p. 194.

ian lesson along the lines of the "survival of the fittest": in submitting to British rule and being overawed by British power, the Maori had lost their own cultural autonomy and their culture had begun to die. Thus, for Japan itself, Shiga began to advocate his widely influential doctrine of *kokusuishugi* 国粋主義 (maintenance of national cultural identity).

But, as Itō Yūshi 伊藤雄志 has noted, Japanese imperialism was not motivated solely by social Darwinism or racist ideology; although these provided some putative justification, there were also more practical factors encouraging Japan's "expansion" to the Asian mainland: "The colonization of Asian countries provided a means for dealing with domestic overpopulation and a breakwater against the territorial expansion of Western powers. It was under these circumstances that Japanese nationalists emphasized Japan's role and prosperity in Asia."[51]

In his analysis of the thought of two leading "nationalist" writers of the early 20th century, Yamaji Aizan 山路愛山 and Naitō Konan 内藤湖南, however, Itō finds that there are crucial differences between their positions on China, and that therefore "the word 'nationalist' is too simplistic to encompass the full complexity of Meiji and Taishō thought."[52] Whereas, for instance, Naitō considered the Chinese incapable of governing themselves and "eventually came to support a Japanese imperialist invasion of China," Yamaji advocated a strong, independent China that would ally itself with Japan "in the mutual interest of maintaining their national independence from Western powers."[53] To provide further grounds for this "natural alliance" between the two East Asian nations, Yamaji also rejected the Sinophobia of many of his contemporaries and emphasized the racial and cultural ties between the two peoples.

Believing, however, that China in its present anarchic state needed a strong central government in order to "create a second Japan in the Far East," Yamaji descried the influence of Westernized Japanese educators in China: "After the Revolution in 1911, Chinese democrats established 'an extremely democratic constitution' on the basis of the 'superficial' theory of constitution they learned from Japanese lecturers and the 'impractical' theory they were taught by Japanese experts on China, in order to make the new President Yuan Shinkai powerless."[54] In an eerie anticipation of the recent debates surrounding the Western interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, Yamaji argued that: "Because there were various dialects, feelings, and customs in China, it was impossible to create one solid national life by means of democratic politics."[55] In short, Yamaji was a very interesting early voice in the long-running debate (more than a century old and still going strong) about whether democracy is a unique product of Western culture and, if so, whether it is culturally suitable for Asia. Although opposing the imposition of a Western-style democracy, he insisted that there was an indigenous form with its roots in Confucian thought. Also he saw the ancient Chinese city states as playing the same role as their Greek counterparts in precipitating the earliest forms of democracy. Given the full complexity and sophisti-

51 Ito 2004, p. 213.

52 Ibid., p. 214.

53 Ibid., p. 216.

54 Ibid., p. 219.

55 Ibid., pp. 219–220.

cation of Yamaji's thought, Ito regrets that postwar Japanese historians have "tended to reassess pre-war Sinology simply as part of the Japanese government's aggressive policies" and thus have neglected to give writers like Yamaji the serious consideration they deserve.[56]

Jung-Sun N. Han also acknowledges the diversity of nationalist thought vis-à-vis overseas expansion, but finds nonetheless that:

> [W]hether it took the form of establishing "a new, European-style empire on the edge of Asia," as Foreign Minister Inoue Karou once claimed, or making a pan-Asian strategic alignment among Japan, Korea, and China to carve out Japan's Asia free of Western imperial encroachment, as Prince Konoe Atsumaro advocated, there was a growing consensus that Japan needed to expand itself onto the Asian continent in order to establish a sovereign and competent nation-state. In short, the modern Japanese transformation was made of both "nation-building" and "empire-building" processes, which were mutually constitutive, sometimes conflicting and sometimes complementing each other.[57]

Focussing in particular on the well-known theorist of democracy, Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造, a professor of law at Tokyo Imperial University, Han argues that "the need to rationalize the imperial project in the changing international system forced Yoshino to redefine Japan's own image of self in accordance with international terms."[58] What this meant in practical terms, for instance, was that he was in favour of Japan's economic penetration of China but not in its territorial expansion there, which he knew would provoke conflict with the other foreign powers on the ground. To offset Japan's economic and industrial weakness relative to the Western powers, according to Han, "Yoshino called for a cultural turn in Japan's China policy."[59] In other words, the Japanese would win the Chinese over by emphasizing their intellectual affinities—but not, surprisingly, their racial or cultural affinities: "what Yoshino assumed as an intellectual affinity was not tradition-bound but a modern invention—it referred to the export of the recent experience of the Meiji Restoration to China."[60] Thus, in his *Short History of Chinese Revolution* (1917), Yoshino described the Chinese revolutionaries as the "spiritual heirs of the Meiji Restoration" and "emphatically articulated the ways in which the Japanese 'spirit' of modernizing the political system was transmitted to the Chinese, laying the groundwork for the Chinese revolutions."[61] In this way he sought "to make the experience of the Meiji Restoration the central paradigm in sustaining the influence of the Japanese Empire."[62]

Ironically in view of the imperialist uses to which he would put it, Yoshino viewed the Meiji Restoration as a great liberal democratic event, "the universal expression of the

56 Ibid., p. 226.
57 Han 2004, p. 231.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., p. 236.
60 Ibid., p. 237.
61 Ibid., pp. 239–240.
62 Ibid., p. 240.

progressive popular will against oppressive government."[63] But, as Han points out, by presenting the Meiji legacy, including the Constitution and the emperor system, through the medium of "liberal discourse," Yoshino hoped to make it "congenial with the dominant imperial norms of international society" and thus ensure the survival of a "new Japan at the core of a liberal empire."[64]

In the thought of writers such as Yamaji and Yoshino, then, we can see some interesting—and paradoxical—early attempts to export or globalize Japanese cultural nationalism by an appeal to some form of pan-Asianism. Although their brave attempts at a grand synthesis of these two apparently conflicting ideologies may not have won many converts on the Asian mainland (except among Japanese expatriates), within Japan itself their ideas became mainstream until 1945, and even today they still help shape popular and nationalist interpretations of Japan's role in Asia-Pacific history.

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64 Ibid., p. 246.

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